

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(17)

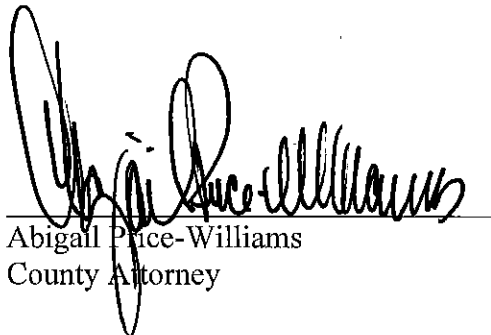
TO: Honorable Chairman Jean Monestime
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: October 5, 2016

FROM: Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution directing the County Mayor to prepare a report on any proactive measures that may be taken to safeguard water sources and water bodies in Miami-Dade County against algae blooms to protect the County's residents, visitors, environment, and local economy

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Rebeca Sosa.



Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

APW/smm

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MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

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and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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Please note any items checked.

- ☐ "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- ☐ 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- ☐ 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- ☐ Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- ☐ Budget required
- ☐ Statement of fiscal impact required
- ☐ Statement of social equity required
- ☐ Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- ☐ No committee review
- ☐ Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____) to approve
- ☐ Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(17)
10-5-16

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE COUNTY MAYOR OR
COUNTY MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO PREPARE A REPORT
ON ANY PROACTIVE MEASURES THAT MAY BE TAKEN
TO SAFEGUARD WATER SOURCES AND WATER BODIES
IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY AGAINST ALGAE BLOOMS TO
PROTECT THE COUNTY'S RESIDENTS, VISITORS,
ENVIRONMENT, AND LOCAL ECONOMY

WHEREAS, in May 2016, large algae blooms began to plague certain Florida communities in and around the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and estuaries, into which polluted water from Lake Okeechobee is discharged; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee, which is Florida's largest freshwater lake, serves as a catchall for runoff from surrounding farms and neighborhoods, with nutrients from septic system discharges, manure, and fertilizer likely impacting the Lake as a matter of course; and

WHEREAS, as fertilizer runs off of farms and enters a water body such as Lake Okeechobee, it creates an overabundance of nutrients in the water, including nitrogen and phosphorus, that can lead to the growth of algae blooms; and

WHEREAS, to reduce stress on the Herbert Hoover Dike, an aging structure surrounding Lake Okeechobee, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers carefully controls water levels by periodically discharging water from the Lake; and

WHEREAS, when rainfalls are especially heavy, as occurred in January 2016, water is dumped in large quantities from the polluted Lake into the surrounding rivers, estuaries, and waterways; and

WHEREAS, although exposure to saltwater has helped to keep the current algae blooms in check, when large amounts of freshwater and nutrient pollution continue to be discharged from the Lake, there is sufficient freshwater and nutrients for the algae blooms to survive, thrive, and grow; and

WHEREAS, the resulting algae blooms can produce toxins that are harmful to humans, as well as to marine wildlife and plants; and

WHEREAS, for example, the toxins produced by the algae blooms can cause a variety of health problems for people exposed to the algae, including skin rashes, respiratory issues, and staph infections if the toxins enter through an open wound; and

WHEREAS, some experts believe the toxins may lead to nausea, vomiting, headaches, seizures, and long-term liver disease if ingested in drinking water; and

WHEREAS, fish, manatees, and other marine wildlife, as well as seagrass and other plants, are also impacted by the algae blooms, which can alter the food chain and deplete oxygen, leading to very large dead zones; and

WHEREAS, algae blooms and the toxins they create can lead to seagrass die-offs and fish kills, with economy-damaging consequences; and

WHEREAS, according to Brian LaPointe, a research professor at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, there is a growing body of evidence that algae blooms are proliferating because of poor land use practices and changing weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, the effects of such algae blooms on human health, the environment, and the economy may be far-reaching; and

WHEREAS, while Miami-Dade County has not experienced algae blooms as severe as those recently seen in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and estuaries, Biscayne Bay has experienced some limited algae blooms over the past 10 years and there is increasing concern that algae blooms could possibly impact the County in the future if measures are not taken to further evaluate and reduce the likely cause of these events; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that the residents, visitors, environment, and local economy of Miami-Dade County are protected, there should be an assessment and report on any proactive measures that may be taken to safeguard against future algae blooms in our local water bodies,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board directs the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to prepare a report addressing any proactive measures that may be taken to safeguard water bodies in Miami-Dade County against algae blooms in order to protect the County's residents, visitors, environment, and local economy. The report shall be provided to this Board within 180 days of the effective date of this resolution, and shall be placed on an agenda of the Board pursuant to Ordinance No. 14-65.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Jean Monestime, Chairman

Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Vice Chairman

Bruno A. Barreiro

Jose "Pepe" Diaz

Sally A. Heyman

Dennis C. Moss

Sen. Javier D. Souto

Juan C. Zapata

Daniella Levine Cava

Audrey M. Edmonson

Barbara J. Jordan

Rebeca Sosa

Xavier L. Suarez

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 5th day of October, 2016. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this Resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

James Eddie Kirtley

